



Department of Energy  
Washington, D.C. 20545

JAN 19 1978

Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve  
Director  
Office of Territorial Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

US DOE
RC 326
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Box 13
Folder Marshall Islands - Jan-June 1978

Dear Ms. Van Cleve:

This is in response to your letter of June 12, 1978, about the urgent need for information on radioactivity of food samples on Eneu Island and use of this island as a relocation site for the current residents of Bikini Island.

The Lawrence Livermore Laboratory has been instructed to give the highest priority to the analyses of the food samples from Eneu Island. The enclosed letter from Dr. William Robison of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory indicates the status of food collections from the Eneu test plot that was established in August 1977.

Within the next 60 days, we expect to have additional data from coconut, papaya, and breadfruit samples which were collected in May 1978, and a partial reassessment of the suitability of Eneu as a permanent residence for the Bikini people. Every effort is being made to expedite this work.

As to the consideration of Eneu Island as an alternate to Bikini Island, there are three points that must be considered:

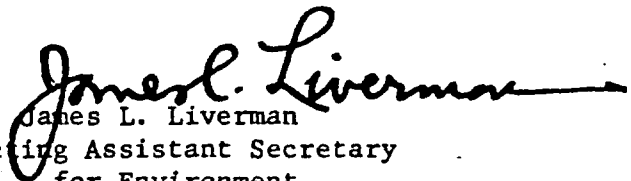
1. The best estimates that we can make now indicate that if the Bikini residents were to live on Eneu Island they will receive radiation doses above the applicable Federal standards, stated both annually and as a cumulative 30-years' exposure.
2. Bikini Island residents now have a history of radiation exposure. This exposure must be added to the estimates of future dose from living on Eneu Island when comparisons with standards are made.
3. If the future doses estimated either for continuing residence on Bikini or for residence on Eneu are to be reduced, there must be a significant reduction in the use of locally grown food stuff. The food crops now causing the excessive doses of radioactivity at Bikini Island will still be nearby and readily accessible if the people move to Eneu Island. Restrictions on the use of certain local foods have been only partially effective in the past.

Ms. Ruth G. Van Cleve

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Because we do not see any practical way to bring the estimated radiation dose down to within the Federal standards, we do not believe at this time that Eneu is a suitable relocation island. We will continue our test plot work and the dose assessments, and we will keep you and the High Commissioner promptly advised of the results of our work.

Sincerely,

  
James L. Liverman  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
for Environment

Enclosure:  
As stated

DOE ARCHIVES